

The Hidden Heiress: Married to My Ex's Brother 4

"You weren't this hard to please the other night."

Alexander's eyes darkened.

Charlotte regretted saying it the second it left her mouth.

Not because she was embarrassed.

Fine. Maybe a little.

Mostly because Alexander looked way too interested.

He stepped closer, slow enough to make every nerve in her body wake up.

"What I want," he said quietly, "you don't know?"

Charlotte didn't move back, but every alarm in her head went off.

Owing anyone was bad.

Owing Alexander Sinclair was worse.

Everyone in the city had heard rumors about him. His mother died when he was young. His father remarried fast. His stepmother miscarried several times, then later died too. People whispered that Alexander had something to do with it.

Alexander never denied anything.

That only made people fear him more.

Charlotte didn't believe gossip that easily, but one thing was clear.

Alexander was dangerous.

He watched her like he could read every thought running through her head.

"What exactly do you want?" Charlotte asked, her voice sharp.

"I haven't decided yet." His gaze stayed on her. "I'll keep the favor for later."

"That sounds like blackmail."

“Only if you’re scared.”

Charlotte stepped closer this time and lowered her voice. “I’m not scared of you.”

Alexander looked down at her.

Then his eyes dropped to her lips.

“Too bad.”

Her eyes narrowed. “What is?”

“My idiot brother never knew what he was missing.”

Heat touched Charlotte’s cheeks, but she kept her back straight and pretended her heart hadn’t stumbled.

When Charlotte returned to the private room, Isabella immediately put down her phone.

“You were in the restroom forever,” Isabella said.

“My stomach hurt.”

“Sure.” Isabella leaned back. “But if you murdered Jasper in the restroom, I can give you an alibi.”

Charlotte took a sip. “Appreciated.”

Isabella snapped her fingers. “Oh, right. I almost forgot. Big news.”

Charlotte looked at her.

“Remember those jewelry sketches you made forever ago? The ones you said were just for fun?”

“I submitted them to that international design competition.”

Charlotte stared at her. “You did what?”

“For fun!” Isabella said quickly. “Don’t look at me like that. Surprise, you won gold.”

Charlotte blinked. “Gold?”

“Yes, Charlotte. Gold. Half the luxury jewelry world is now hunting for the mysterious designer called Nine.”

Charlotte rubbed her forehead. “Isabella.”

Isabella pushed an envelope across the table. “Certificate. Prize details. I’ll transfer the money to you later. Also, a lot of brands want to work with you.”

Charlotte opened the envelope.

The certificate was printed clearly.

Designer: Nine.

It was a name she had used years ago without thinking much about it.

She set the certificate down. “Okay.”

Isabella stared at her. “Okay? That’s it?”

“What did you want me to do? Stand on the table and give a speech?”

“Yes. Maybe cry a little. Act humble. Give me something.”

Charlotte smiled faintly.

It wasn’t that she didn’t care.

She had simply learned too many things growing up. Piano, painting, finance, languages, design. Alistair had never raised her to be decorative.

If Charlotte wanted to master something, she did.

Jewelry design was only one of many things she had hidden.

When she was with Jasper, she kept herself simple. Plain clothes. Quiet lifestyle. Low profile.

All to protect his fragile pride.

God, she wanted to shake her younger self.

After dinner, Isabella grabbed her hand. “Come on. It’s still early. Let’s go out.”

Charlotte leaned back in her chair. “Next time.”

Isabella’s expression softened. “Jasper drained you, huh?”

“A little.”

“Fine.” Isabella squeezed her hand. “Rest this weekend. But I’m still taking you out soon.”

They parted at the restaurant entrance.

Charlotte went straight home.

The moment she walked in, she stripped off her clothes and went into the shower.

She stayed under the water for nearly two hours, scrubbing every place Jasper had touched.

Her skin turned red, but the disgust still clung to her.

Over the next few days, her phone wouldn’t stop ringing.

News of Nine winning the competition spread faster than expected. Luxury brands, private buyers, fashion groups, and design studios all wanted to contact the mysterious designer.

Charlotte ignored most of them.

Then one email caught her eye.

An invitation from Wainwright Jewelry.

The Wainwright family had made its fortune in high-end jewelry. In recent years, they had been pushing hard into the luxury market, desperate to raise their brand’s image.

Serena wanted Nine as an exclusive designer.

Charlotte stared at the email.

Then she laughed.

“Well, this is going to be fun.”

They had no idea.

Nine was Charlotte Whitfield.

She didn’t reply.

Let them wait.

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The dinner party Alistair had mentioned arrived a few days later.

It was held at a private estate by one of the city's most influential hosts. Black cars lined the valet entrance. Champagne moved through the crowd on silver trays. Crystal chandeliers lit the ballroom.

Charlotte arrived early.

She wore a sleek black gown, simple at first glance. But anyone who understood fashion would notice the cut, the fabric, and the quiet detail worked into every line.

Her makeup was soft. Her hair was pinned up, with a few loose strands near her face.

She didn't need much.

Most of the people there were strangers to her, so she took a glass of champagne and stood in a quiet corner.

"Did you hear Mr. Whitfield might come tonight?"

"The Whitfield family? The overseas one?"

"That's them. Whitfield Group prints money."

"I heard his granddaughter was raised by him after her parents died in a plane crash."

"Rumor says he might bring her tonight."

"Can you imagine marrying that girl?"

"You wouldn't just marry rich. You'd marry untouchable."

Charlotte sipped her champagne silently.

None of them knew the girl they were talking about was standing three steps away, wondering if the appetizers were worth the hype.

"Speaking of mystery women, who's the one in the black dress?"

Charlotte didn't turn.

But she felt the attention shift toward her.

"No idea. Doesn't look like a random guest."

"She has that old-money vibe."

“Look at her dress. That stitching is custom-level.”

“Maybe someone’s daughter.”

“Or someone’s wife.”

“No ring.”

Charlotte fought back a smile.

Interesting crowd.

Then the mood in the ballroom shifted.

People near the entrance started whispering.

Jasper Sinclair and Serena Wainwright walked in arm in arm, polished and camera-ready. Jasper wore a dark suit, his forehead healed enough for makeup to hide the injury. Serena wore a white gown and a bright, proud smile.

Charlotte stood at the edge of the crowd.

Still, Jasper saw her.

His eyes locked on her and stayed there.

He had never seen this version of Charlotte.

When they were together, she wore jeans, simple T-shirts, plain dresses.

Tonight, she looked untouchable.

Someone nearby murmured, “The woman in black is stunning.”

Jasper’s chest tightened.

Possession rose in him, sharp and ugly.

That was Charlotte.

His Charlotte.

The girl who used to wait for him after class. The girl who looked at him like he was already enough.

How had he never seen her like this?

Serena followed his gaze.

Her smile vanished.

Again.

Charlotte.

Serena's fingers dug into Jasper's arm, hard enough to crease his sleeve.

Charlotte shouldn't be here.

This wasn't that restaurant. This was a private high-society dinner. Heirs, politicians, old families, serious money.

Someone like Charlotte had no right to walk through the door.

Unless she had followed Jasper.

Or found another man to bring her in.

Serena's anger sharpened into something mean.

Good.

Then she would embarrass Charlotte in front of everyone.

Serena raised her voice and pointed straight at Charlotte.

"Does that woman even have an invitation? Maybe security should check. Some people love sneaking into places they don't belong, especially when they're still chasing someone else's husband."

Guests exchanged looks.

"Is that true?"

"She's chasing a married man?"

"Some people have no shame."

Charlotte slowly set down her champagne glass.

Before she could speak, an older gentleman near the champagne table frowned.

“Wait,” he said, staring at Charlotte. “Wasn’t Mr. Whitfield supposed to bring his granddaughter tonight?”

The woman beside him followed his gaze.

Her eyes widened slightly.

“You think that’s her?”